



PRESS RELEASE

Poway Unified School District

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Poway Unified School District Welcomes New Leadership Ahead of 2021-22 School Year

10 New School Principals, 6 District Directors appointed by PUSD Board

(San Diego, CA) – The Poway Unified School District (PUSD) is proud to welcome new leadership in advance of the 2021-2022 school year at multiple school sites and district departments. As PUSD prepares to offer multiple learning options for a full return this fall, each of these highly regarded and experienced professionals will ensure PUSD students, staff, and school communities are fully supported during this challenging time in K12 education. This hiring season is especially exciting with even more changes than normal years. This unprecedented movement is happening in school districts all across the county, with a record high number of district leaders and school administrators retiring and promoting. We are pleased to continue our culture of excellence with these new leaders appointed by the Board of Education:

Name:	School Site/Department:	Approval Date:
Hee-Jin Peterson	Principal, Adobe Bluffs Elementary School	June 22, 2021
Roderick Gayta	Principal, Canyon View Elementary School	June 3, 2021
Denise Goulart	Principal, Chaparral Elementary School	June 22, 2021
Ernie Remillard	Principal, Design39 Campus	June 3, 2021
Kellie Moore	Principal, Mesa Verde Middle School	June 3, 2021
Dr. Sheryl Fleming	Principal, Morning Creek Elementary School	June 22, 2021
Rhiannon Buhr	Principal, Park Village Elementary School	June 22, 2021
Mindy Davis	Principal, Rolling Hills Elementary School	June 3, 2021
Harmeena Omoto	Principal, Shoal Creek Elementary School	June 3, 2021
Dr. Larry Hausner	Principal, Stone Ranch Elementary School	June 3, 2021
Charan Kirpalani	Director, Human Resources	May 13, 2021
Mark Atkins	Director, Human Resources	May 13, 2021
Jill Halsey	Director I, Connect Academy & Digital Learning	June 22, 2021
Eddie Park	Director II, Global Languages & Innovative Learning	June 22, 2021
Dr. Shawntanet Jara	Director II, Equity & Improvement	June 22, 2021
Christine Donnelly	Executive Director II, LSS	June 3, 2021



Hee-Jin Peterson: Principal, Adobe Bluffs Elementary

Ms. Peterson has 24 years of progressive experience and accomplishment as an educator and administrator who is focused on transformational curriculum, instruction and assessment. As a site leader, she is passionate about bringing positive energy and a relentless pursuit of personal excellence for both students and staff. Ms. Peterson comes to PUSD from Lakeside Union School District, where she served as an administrator for three schools, including Winter Gardens Trilingual Immersion School. She attributes her love for teaching to her beginnings in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and to her parents who were both teachers in Seoul, South Korea.



Roderick Gayta: Principal, Canyon View Elementary

Mr. Gayta comes to PUSD from the Solana Beach School District, where he previously served as an Assistant Principal, Upper Elementary Teacher, STEAM Teacher, and Teaching and Learning Specialist. As a veteran educator with nearly 20 years of experience, Mr. Gayta is passionate about innovating change in school communities by providing students, staff and families with the tools necessary to succeed in the world. He believes that culturally responsive pedagogy, critical thinking, creativity, social emotional learning, and collaboration should be at the core of school culture, and hopes to foster meaningful relationships with the Canyon View community.



Denise Goulart: Principal, Chaparral Elementary

Ms. Goulart is an experienced primary level administrator, having previously served as an Elementary Principal at schools in Pacific Beach, Alpine and Lakeside. Under her leadership, these schools were awarded large grants that target project-based learning, student engagement, and professional development. Ms. Goulart successfully increased student attendance, established respective sites as STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) schools, increased site-wide English Language Learning efforts, and helped raise funds for campus beautification projects. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in Educational Leadership, and aspires to further the work Chaparral Elementary is doing to empower world-class learners.



Ernie Remillard: Principal, Design39 Campus

Mr. Remillard is joining PUSD after 17 years in the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). He brings a strong drive for equity and excellence in the classroom, and a passion for establishing pathways that enhance student learning opportunities and career readiness. As a Principal and Vice Principal in SDUSD, Mr. Remillard oversaw the development and implementation of numerous academic and social programs including BLUE STEAM, Mandarin Chinese immersion, Military family liaisons and outreach, special education, and more. As Design Facilitator and Principal, he will nurture creative confidence, design thinking, and global connection in students and the D39 community as a whole.



Kellie Moore: Principal, Mesa Verde Middle

After five successful years as Assistant Principal of Rancho Bernardo High School (Rancho Bernardo), Ms. Moore comes to Mesa Verde Middle School to serve as Principal. Ms. Moore has dedicated over 10 years to student well-being and readiness at the secondary level in both PUSD and the Coronado Unified School District (CUSD). As an administrator, she oversaw implementation of and adherence to student intervention plans, school-wide equity and restorative justice practices, professional development goals, and site and department budgets. In addition to this, Ms. Moore also

oversaw development of standards-based curricula, created school marketing materials, and spearheaded engaging extra-curricular opportunities for students. She plans to further the work Mesa Verde is doing in all these categories, as well.



Sheryl Fleming, Ed.D.: Principal, Morning Creek Elementary

Dr. Fleming comes to PUSD from Oceanside Unified School District, where she was the Principal of Del Rio Elementary School. Dr. Fleming is a passionate educator who believes all children have the right to a high quality education. She sets high expectations for students, families, staff, and herself, because “we typically rise to the occasion when someone believes we can.” Dr. Fleming hopes to inspire students to reach their potential and make a difference in the world. Prior to her current position, she has served as a general and special education elementary teacher, instructional coach, and assistant principal.



Rhiannon Buhr: Principal, Park Village Elementary

Ms. Buhr will be marking her eighth year in Poway Unified as the Principal of Park Village Elementary School in Rancho Penasquitos for 2021-2022. She has previously served as the Principal of Chaparral Elementary School in Poway, which is one of the district's largest forces of parent and community volunteers, at an average of 13,500 volunteer hours per year. She is passionate about increasing student responsibility for individual behavior. Under her leadership, Chaparral was named a No Place for Hate campus for its positive social environment and character education. Ms. Buhr is excited to join the Park Village community, and cannot wait to welcome students back to campus in the fall.



Mindy Davis: Principal, Rolling Hills Elementary

Ms. Davis' mission as an educator is to lead with compassion, build collective capacity, and promote student learning and achievement. She has successfully lived out this mission in her time as a teacher and administrator in both California and Utah. Ms. Davis works tirelessly to close the achievement gap for English Language Learners, analyze and reflect upon student data to determine appropriate individualized supports, form site advisory committees in multiple arenas, and focus attention on small group instruction for diverse learners and learning styles. After four years as an Assistant Principal of Chaparral Elementary School, Ms. Davis will bring her passion for student-centered teaching and learning to Rolling Hills Elementary effective July 1, 2021.



Harmeena Omoto: Principal, Shoal Creek Elementary

In a year that has changed the face of public education, Ms. Omoto has remained steadfast in supporting students and staff as they navigate the world of teaching and learning. Ms. Omoto has spent considerable time planning and modeling effective learning strategies for students that align with core site principles such as design thinking and research-based solutions. She believes strong instructional strategy only takes place when staff are provided with opportunities for growth, and plans to facilitate such sessions for Shoal Creek staff upon her arrival.



Larry Hausner, Ed.D: Principal, Stone Ranch Elementary

Dr. Hausner places value on bolstering the programs and services that provide students with opportunities to find true passions. After a career as a sportscaster, he pivoted to education where he has served as a teacher, assistant principal and principal in the Orange Unified and Saddleback Valley school districts. Additionally, he has served as the Administrative Director of Communications, Educational Technology and Child Welfare and Attendance in Orange while working as an adjunct professor of education at the University of Southern California (USC) and Concordia University. Dr. Hausner cannot wait to bring his passion for rigorous, student-

centered learning to Stone Ranch in July.



Charan Kirpalani: Director, Human Resources

Mr. Kirpalani joins the Human Resources Department after a career as a school administrator in PUSD. Previously, he served as Assistant Principal at Twin Peaks Middle and Westview High Schools, and as Principal of Black Mountain Middle School. His extensive experience in school site administration enabled a transition to the Escondido Union High School District, where he served as the Director of Human Resources. Mr. Kirpalani is driven by his passion to assist other educators and administrative professionals, and is looking forward to rejoining the PUSD community.



Mark Atkins: Director, Human Resources

For the last 14 years, Mr. Atkins has served the Shoal Creek and Adobe Bluffs communities as Principal and provided an environment wherein students feel empowered to reach their full potential. Mr. Atkins successfully built community relationships with the PTA, Foundations, and staff unions as a means of growing school programs. His lifelong career in education has taken him throughout Central and Southern California as both a teacher and site administrator, and now he hopes to further his people-building skills as the Director of HR.



Jill Halsey: Director I, Connect Academy & Digital Learning

Ms. Halsey believes in using transformational leadership to influence and inspire a lasting impact on learners of all capacities. As the Principal of Canyon View Elementary in PUSD, she placed great value on collaboration, individual support and targeted feedback for both students and staff. Ms. Halsey developed and facilitated numerous 1:1 educational technology programs for students, and implemented the “Canyon View Innovation Station.” Her previous experience includes Instructional Leadership Coach, Curriculum Coach, and Resource Specialist for students with differing learning abilities.



Eddie Park: Director II, Global Languages & Innovative Learning

Mr. Park is a veteran educator who aligns the district’s initiatives to foster global competitiveness by promoting innovative and language immersion programs in and out of the classroom. He is a strong advocate of building working relationships with local, national and international communities to benefit the school environment. Mr. Park’s past experience as a Language Arts and Social Studies teacher, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, Principal, and International Guest Speaker have equipped him with the tools necessary to take charge of PUSD’s new Global Languages and Innovative Learning position.



Dr. Shawntanet Jara: Director II, Equity & Improvement

Dr. Jara is an educator and researcher focused on diagnosing and assessing equity within the culture, policies, programs, practices and processes of educational institutions to support the advancement of all students. It is her vision to model and set the direction to shape an environment where equity and excellence are the standard for everything. Dr. Jara comes to PUSD after 24 years in the East Whittier City and Solana Beach School Districts. She is an adjunct faculty lecturer and Chair of Master’s Theses at CSU San Marcos, has previously taught at UC San Diego and Alder Graduate School of Education, and is an equity consultant.



Christine Donnelly: Executive Director II, Learning Support Services

Ms. Donnelly's philosophy of education is, "Every Student, Every Day" - students feel welcome and affirmed while she ensures their academic and social-emotional needs are met. She has dedicated over 25 years in education to PUSD. After successfully developing new English Language Learner Programs, 1:1 technology programs, and Academy programs at PUSD schools, she will join the Learning Support Services department as an Executive Director overseeing elementary schools to continue to support each student, family, and staff member.

In addition to the above Principals and Directors, PUSD is pleased to welcome seven new assistant principals to the following school sites:

- Black Mountain Middle School: Valerie White
- Chaparral Elementary School: Mike Gizzo
- Design39Campus: Amie Tillman
- Meadowbrook Middle School: Matt Hunt and Alicia Lopez
- Rancho Bernardo High School: Maria Canales
- Westwood Elementary: Kristin Sullens

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